

13  
GENUINE HAPPINESS

A  
POETICAL ESSAY.

*Vivere nature si convenienter oportet*

Hor :

Thou nature art my Goddess

SHAKS

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D E D I C A T I O N.

To DOCTOR-----\*

S I R,

I F I had known any other Person more remarkable for deep Erudition, sound Piety, and superiour Understanding than yourself, I would have addressed my GENUINE HAPPINESS to *Him*; but as I do not, you must throw the Blame on your distinguished Abilites for the Liberty I now take, and suffer me to hope from your Pen, an Investigation of some Queres in the following Pages which though I have proposed, I confess myself unable to answer. Believe me Sir with Esteem and Respect.



Your obliged and obedient  
humble Servant.

The A U T H O R.

\* *As this Gentleman is one of the principal Members of a respectable Community here. He did not chuse his Name should appear in support of a Poetical Essay.*



## GENUINE HAPPINESS

## A POETICAL ESSAY.

**O**N TRUTH's safe Wings, the Muse pursues her Flight,  
 To clear the Paths of GENUINE DELIGHT;  
 Inculcate Nature's easy Rules, and teach  
 That human Joys are fix'd in human Reach;  
 That Men thro' false Pursuits true Comfort miss,  
 And Instinct more than Reason points to Bliss.  
 Such are her Tenets.----And from hence she proves,  
 REASON is Foe to Man, but NATURE loves;  
 And loving, can this Maxim be denied?  
 Nature thro' Nature's Paths is ablest Guide.  
 Yet yielding first to Thought's too busy Train,  
 Thus meditates the MUSE in doubtful Strain.

While Life this short and narrow Course supplies,  
 If Happiness rewards the truly Wise;  
 O! How shall we obtain the precious Meed?  
 Must Man acquire, or is't by Heav'n decreed?

Is it like Wit, like Beauty, or high Birth,  
 An unbought Blessing to a Son of Earth?  
 Or is't a Vain Chimæra we pursue?  
 For ever false, or fugitive if true!  
 In fine, if hence by Vice and Folly driv'n,  
 FELICITY affects her native Heav'n;  
 How wild th' Attempt her airy Paths to find,  
 Who skims the liquid Sky on Wings of Wind?  
 Angels alone such Quarry can pursue,  
 To Earth-born Eyes, a Moment breaks the View!  
 For when the Phantom seems with wearied Wings,  
 To hover o'er the Palaces of Kings,  
 T'is but to mock 'em with vain Hopes of Bliss,  
 Which They of all Mankind are sure to miss;  
 Sooner might Cottages her Flight delay,  
 With Calms allure and tempt her loit'ring Stay,  
 Yet even there She rests but for a Day;  
 She only stops to imp her Eagle Plumes,  
 And swift as Thought her Heav'nly Flight resumes:  
 Vain then the Chase----And yet so vast the Prize!  
 That all prepare to shoot Her as she flies:                      Some



Some too with Level steadier than the rest,  
 Have brush'd a Feather from her lucid Crest ;  
 But the best Marks-men have most Anguish found,  
 And Taste of Bliss inflicts the deepest Wound ;  
 What then remains ?—Must Man denied Relief,  
 For ever struggle with continued Grief ?  
 Was Thirst of Happiness (our Nature's Bane)  
 Implanted for a lasting Source of Pain ?  
 Impious Suggestion ! Nor by Heav'n design'd ;  
 Search then at Home and we th' Abuse shall find.

The World is Harmony in ev'ry Part,  
 A self tun'd Organ without Aid of Art ;  
 The skilful Mistress who the Music set,  
 Can neither wildly vary, nor forget ;  
 But when vain Man would alter and refine,  
 The faultless Setting of a Hand divine ;  
 In vain the Keys are struck, and Bellows blown,  
 The jarring Pipes forget their wonted Tone ;  
 And Harmony to Discord yields her Throne.

THUS Nature chalk'd each Bliss proportional,  
 Man grasps at more, and therefore misses all:  
 Th' aspiring Reptile meditates a Way,  
 To cloath with INFINITE the breathing Clay;  
 Glances at Heav'n with arrogating Eye,  
 And MORTAL aims at IMMORTALITY.  
 Excursive Thought already marks his Flight  
 From Orb to Orb—Thro' Fields of fadeless Light  
 Advent'rous on the glitt'ring Wing he soars,  
 And all the radiant Tracks of Heav'n explores;  
 Views the Recesses of the blest Abodes,  
 Quaffs Seas of Joy, and bathes in boundless Floods;  
 But soon the beatific Vision fades,  
 And Woe substantial shadowy Joy succeeds.  
 Thought's melting Pinions like the CRETAN's fail,  
 And as they drop this fatal Truth reveal,  
 That Heav'n but fancied, makes a real Hell.  
 Cease then frail Dust Eternity to trace,  
 Nor mete Infinity thro' bounded Space;



For who affays as far as Heav'n to throw  
 The mortal Arrow—breaks the feeble Bow.  
 EARTH is Man's Station, MORTAL is his Name,  
 And mortal Pleasures only can he claim :  
 These then allow'd sufficiently we're blest,  
 These let's enjoy—and leave to Heav'n the rest ;  
 Rejecting this, Man by Caprice betray'd,  
 Foregoing Substance grasps at less than Shade ;  
 Shadows at least in lively Forms are view'd,  
 While varying Phantoms Thought itself elude,  
 Nor Æsop's Dog his Aim deserv'd to lose,  
 Equal to him who such a Shade pursues.

But say are all who are too wise to strain,  
 Thought's failing Sinews in a CHACE so vain,  
 Sure to detain on Earth th' evasive Prize,  
 Whose agile Flight preserves her for the Skies ?  
 Are the false Baits of Wealth or Pow'r secure  
 To bring th' alig'rous Alien to the Lure ?  
 Investigate their Worth, and find if They  
 Have Force to fix, or Charms to tempt her Stay.

WHAT'S Pow'r or Wealth? Were they not form'd to bless,  
 To crush Oppression and to heal Distress?  
 Yet Tyranny the Reins of Empire keeps,  
 And Av'rice starves amidst polluted Heaps.  
 But say what Tyrant or what Miser's blest?  
 Can DAMOCLES or TANTALUS find Rest?  
 Pow'r barren or abus'd no Joy supplies,  
 And Bliss from hoarded Wealth indignant flies;  
 By Distribution their true Stamp's imprest,  
 And to shed Blessings, is to be most blest.  
 Thus false Pursuits or the Abuse of true,  
 Create alike the Evils we'd eschew;  
 And MEN may in their Management of Joys,  
 Be aptly liken'd to unthrifty Boys;  
 As Children PLAY-THINGS, They their BLESSINGS mar,  
 Too fickle some, and some too constant are:  
 THESE for burst Bubbles Lamentation make,  
 And THOSE to gain new Toys their old ones break;  
 Thus whether EPICURE or STOIC Stil'd,  
 Man mimics but the fond, or froward Child:  
 But all who seek for lasting Bliss below,  
 (or prizing future, present Joys forego,)

Are



Are Reason's Dupes, and thwarting Nature's Rules,  
In search of Wisdom dwindle into Fools.

THE happy BRUTES unskill'd in Reason's Lore,  
Enjoy their Portion, nor aspire to more;  
By Instinct's Card unerringly they steer,  
Thro' Life's vast Ocean, in a smooth Career:  
No Gusts of Passion veer them from their Course,  
Nor Tides of Sorrow to the Leeward force;  
Obsequious Nature all her Blessings yields,  
The Waves roll gently, and the HALCYON builds:  
Thus, fraught with GENUINE HAPPINESS, they sail  
Down Life's smooth Current with a steady Gale;  
While MAN, Pride's Fool, and Passion's shackled Slave,  
Works his frail Vessel against Wind and Wave;  
Now rais'd with Rapture, now depress'd by Care,  
Now bouy'd by Hope, now sinking thro' Dispair:  
The faithful Compass thrown with Scorn aside,  
He drives a random Course thro' Fortune's Tide:  
Precarious Current! Where the self-same Wave  
Which late of Heav'n th' intrancing Prospect gave,  
Swoll'n to Mountain then, now sinks into a grave.

Is it then foreign to deduce from hence,  
 That Reason's dazzling Ray glows too intense  
 For Man's weak Optics—dark'ning Nature's Light,  
 As the swift Sun-Beam overpow'rs the Sight?  
 Or is this Stricture of th' immortal Mind,  
 When once to abject Earth in contact join'd,  
 So quench'd in Dust, as never to reflect  
 A Ray thro' Life's dusk Lab'rinth to direct,  
 And teach our shallow Thought to comprehend,  
 Of Nature's Wonders, or the Means or End?  
 Hath this so vaunted Gift the Pow'r to trace  
 A single Path, 'midst her mysterious Ways?  
 Can this decide if Matter be create?  
 Or bears the bulky Mass eternal Date?

REASON declare, if thou can'st understand,  
 How sprang forth Time, or whence did Space expand?  
 What bounds its Empire? If a boundless Void;  
 How first produc'd, or last to be destroy'd?  
 Can past Eternals know a future End?  
 Or Yester's Birth thence infinite extend?

How



How kindles into Life the breathless Clay ?  
 The lighted Lamp, why burns it but a Day ?  
 Its Flame once spent, does it elsewhere relume ?  
 Or rest extinct for ever in the Tomb ?  
 Did mystic Nature, with Design replete,  
 Creation's Work attend and regulate ?  
 Or did wild Atoms self-conven'd, advance,  
 Leap into Form, and prove a World by chance ?  
 If Wisdom caus'd, can Casualty preside ?  
 Or form'd fortuitous, can Order guide ?  
 Reason prepare----conciliate these to Sense,  
 Or wave thy Title to Pre-eminence ;  
 Or if a Task like this too mighty shows,  
 Can't thou the Springs of thine own Pow'r disclose ?  
 Can't thou determine, if the human Mind  
 At first an universal Blank we find,  
 Imbibing slowly, what the Time-writ Page  
 Of Earth's Experience opens but to Age ?  
 Or does high Heav'n at once the Leaf unroll,  
 And print innate Ideas in the Soul ?

Or

Or are some bought, while some are freely giv'n?  
 Part Earth-acquir'd, and Part instill'd by Heav'n?  
 Is Mankind free? Or does some Pow'r unseen  
 Direct our Choice, and actuate the Machine?  
 In fine this WILL, this Prompter unexplor'd,  
 In the Soul's Palace is it Slave or Lord?  
 If Fate compulsive o'er the Will preside,  
 Merit how lost--and Oh How humbled Pride!  
 If FORE-SIGHT INFINITE be-speaks DECREE.  
 Then Earth were doom'd e're Heav'n bade Nature be;  
 Or if Success be Chance, to the blind Dame,  
 Lo Good and Evil equal press the Beam.

REASON speak out, these jarring Points decide,  
 Compose the Contest and bid Peace preside;  
 Or aidless here, confess thy boasted Ray,  
 An IGNIS FATUUS leading Thought astray;  
 Too unestablish'd Truth's Abodes to show,  
 And thro' false Mediums shedding Light on Woe;  
 Yet when harsh Doubts upon the Mind obtrude,  
 Imbitt'ring Thought with vain Solitude,



To sooth the Throbbings of an anxious Breast,  
 Reflect with Joy on this, nor heed the rest :

“ WHEN Earth’s frail Son, of strange and fearful make,  
 “ From Dreamless Sleep first feels himself Awake,  
 “ He finds that he’s a crawling Reptile here,  
 “ But neither knows his CAUSE, nor END should fear:  
 “ Yet since he’s found within the World’s wide Fence,  
 “ NATURE who call’d him there, must guide him thence;  
 “ She that to BRUTES points out so sure a Way,  
 “ Can never lead her noblest Work astray.

—Man, take the Track, pursue it, and give o’er  
 Worlds of reverfionary Bliss t’ explore,  
 They Sum of present Joy, pays, past and future score

SOFT are the Paths and easy to pursue,  
 Where GENUINE HAPPINESS extends the Clue:  
 In one short Line the total sum we prove, (LOVE:  
 HEALTH, PEACE, and FRIENDSHIP, COMPETENCE, and  
 And first HYGIEA, Goddess of the Croud  
 Whose glowing Cheeks proclaim their gen’rous Blood,  
 Thee I invoke to raise the drooping Song,  
 For nothing languid can to Thee belong;

Teach

Teach it like Thee to glow, like Thee respire  
 With graceful Beauty, nervous Strength, and Fire;  
 So shall it gain a long Reprieve from Death,  
 Escape th' Infection of the Critic's Breath,  
 And leave a Verse to celebrate thy Name,  
 Thy efficacious Pow'r in Pleasure's Scheme :  
 Thou Salt of Life, that season'st all below,  
 Refinest ev'ry Joy, and dampest ev'ry Woe;  
 Thy Presence adds new Lustre to the Day,  
 Exults in Mirth, and chafes Spleen away:  
 What State so mean, but Thou hast Pow'r to bless,  
 Thou genial SUN to human Happiness!  
 Ev'n Penury looks bright beneath thy Beams,  
 And Grandeur when thou'rt clouded, faintly gleams;  
 Touch'd into Joy, Thee, Goddess, all obey,  
 And NATURE bows to thy resistless Sway : (WIT,  
 YOUTH, SPIRIT, VIGOUR, STRENGTH, LOVE, BEAUTY,  
 Shrink at thy Absence, and to Pain submit.  
 But Thou return'd, the lovely Group we see  
 Prompt to thy Smile, rejoicing all with Thee :  
 Such thy vast Pow'r---But say what Clime or Shore;  
 To trace thy Blessings shall the MUSE explore?



Where from the World and all its Cures retir'd,  
 By Wisdom, and the Love of Truth inspir'd,  
 Contented I might rest, where Thou and Peace  
 Might'st crown with Chearfulness, a Life of Ease ;  
 Nor suffer Care the blest Retreat to see,  
 For ever sacred to the MUSE and me :

YET here, O COMPETENCE, without thy Aid,  
 Joy pining droops, and withers in the Shade ;  
 'Tis thine alone to free her happy Reign,  
 From ruthless Want and her afflictive Train :  
 Thou fill'st the frugal Bowl with rosy Wine,  
 And the Board spread with healthful Chear, is thine ;  
 Thou warm'st the chilly Veins with mod'rate Fires,  
 These are thy Gifts---and Life no more requires.

YET, O ! far richer Blessings are in Store,  
 When friendly Converse cheers th' unruffled Hour.  
 DIVINEST FRIENDSHIP, 'tis to Thee we owe  
 The Zest of all our Happiness below ;  
 Nor HEALTH, nor PEACE, nor COMPETENCE can bless,  
 If thou art absent from the sweet Recess ;  
 Thou giv'st new Pleasure, to each Pleasure there,  
 Prime of Delight---a Brother's Bliss to share :  
 The lone-felt Joy sheds but a feeble Ray,  
 Glimmers thro' Life, nor knows a perfect Day ; (while

While sweet Participation's radiant Blaze  
 Various as Light, thro' countless Blessings plays :  
 This Mirth inspirits, this alleviates Pain,  
 And acts our ev'ry Comfort o'er again :  
 Thus ever mingling with congenial Flame,  
 Know BLISS and FRIENDSHIP differ but in Name ;  
 What wounds the one, the other must destroy,  
 For Friendship ever was the Soul of Joy.

Is there no more? O Yes, the last remains,  
 Crown of our Comfort, sweetner of our pains ;  
 \* There is a Time when Love no Wish denies,  
 And smiling Nature throws off all Disguise ;  
 But who can Words to paint those Raptures find ?  
 Vast Sea of Extasy, that drowns the Mind !  
 That fierce Transfusion of exchanging Hearts !  
 That gliding Glimpse of Heav'n in pulsive Starts !  
 That Rush of Joy !---That wild tumultuous Roll !  
 That Fire, which kindles Body in to Soul !  
 And on Life's Margin strains Delight so high,  
 That Sense breaks short---and as we taste we die.

F I N I S.

\* A surreptitious and imperfect copy of these lines have been printed in the  
 2d Vol. of the ADVENTURES of DAVID RANGER.